



MIZH MAHSUD

Mahsud Scout 1938-2014



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Mizh Mahsud

History of Mahsud Scouts 1937- 2014

Mahsud Scouts have a convoluted history; it was raised as **5th Mahsud Road Construction Battalion on 9th August 1937** at Razmak as part of Waziristan Command. It was an army unit having army table of organization and equipment. British had raised four such battalions in the Waziristan from 1935 onwards. These battalions had one thing unique; they were not armed with any weapon rather these were road construction battalions wholly consisted of Mahsud Tribe and commanded by a British officer, 5th Mahsud battalion was raised and commanded by **Major R.S.Jhonson** for a year before the battalion itself underwent transition; it was put under Frontier Corps control from Army in April 1938.

The very first task undertaken by the battalion was the construction of Razmak cantonment extension and huttied accommodation. With this change of command another important feature was a change in name, now it was simply known as the Mahsud Battalion still only armed with shovel and pick. One of the key lesson of Frontier warfare has been to keep an eye on the composition of native tribes in militia; no single tribe to have predominate majority and secondly to maintain a balance between the cis frontier and cross frontier tribes within a militia in Frontier Corps. Mahsud battalion was an exception as it still remained wholly composed of Mahsud. Mahsud battalion after Razmak took part in the construction of Nowshehra Ammunition Depot in 1940-41 and then took part in the construction of anti tank defence at Thall in 1941-42 which can be seen even today. Oghi –Durband road construction was another major project undertaken by the battalion. It was seldom employed in unity rather field construction companies were spread out within the frontier carrying out construction of roads and buildings especially the camps.

Another battalion **2nd Mahsud Battalion** was also raised in 1944 during the dying days of Second World War It was raised at Sararogha in June 1944 under the command of Lieutenant Colonel R.E.F.G North thus the old 5th battalion which had become only Mahsud battalion was now known as First mahsud Battalion . It was the good experience of the First mahsud which had in fact laid the foundation of the second battalion. Both shared similar cultural traits and were known as Mizh thus the Mahsud Battalions were known as' Mizh Mahsud ' It is a Pakhtu word meaning 'we'. Mizh has become an expletive with the Mahsud who would always say 'Mizh mahsud, i.e. 'we Mahsud' it conveys unity and cohesion which is an outstanding characteristic of the Mahsud.

There are main tribes of Mahsud – Alizai, Shaman Khel and Bahlolzai; collectively all three are known as 'Dre Mahsud' [three Mahsud]. One platoon of Urmars was also part of Mizh Mahsud; Urmars are non Mahsud but are affiliated to Shaman Khel.¹ The main tasks

¹ The Frontier Corps an Introduction, Code No FCP-1, a Frontier Corps publication, 1967. P-166.

were construction of roads, airfields, ammunition depot and other similar works of construction and maintenance.

Mahsud

Mahsud are inhabitants of South Waziristan Agency, on the east and north they are bordered by Uthmanzai Wazirs, Ahmedzai Wazir are on the west and Bhittanis are in their south. Dre Mahsud which comprises of three main tribes, Alizai, Bahlolzai and Shamankhel have further sub-clans also. Manzai and Shabikhel are sub clans of Alizai, Bahlolzai have four sub-clans namely Aimalkhel, Nanokhel, Shingi and Bandkhel, whereas Shamankhel have Budinzai, Charkhel, Galleshai and Khalil Khel. These sub clans or the main off shoots are not territorial contiguous and neither restricted to any geographical area rather clan and sub clans are all scattered within south Waziristan. Alizai have invariably enjoyed the leadership of the Mahsud²

1947-48 Kashmir

On independence the battalion was busy in the construction of Balakot road. The heroic deeds of the battalion during the first Kashmir War of 1947-1948 are one of the golden chapters of its history. It was unarmed yet when the opportunity arises of helping the brother Muslims in the Kashmir the Mahsud rushed forward. The battalion was not officially employed in the war rather the scouts were encouraged to take part in the liberation of Kashmir voluntarily. From November 1947 onwards when Gilgit Scouts had carried out the war of liberation in Gilgit and Baltistan which resulted in the war being stretched to the limit in the extreme north , it was then that the battalion was given the task of constructing and improving the existing track leading to Gilgit; Babusar Pass .

Major Mir Badshah Mahsud and Subedar Major Muhammad Akbar Mahsud wrote the very first chapter of Mahsud's bravery under Frontier Corps. Major Badshah was decorated with Fakhr-i-Kashmir, hilal-1- Kashmir and Imtiazi Sanad for his excellent command of Mahsud. Subedar Major Muhammad Akbar was decorated with Sitara-i- Jurat; he is the very first Mahsud to be decorated with such decoration. Words about Major Mir Badshah, there were two officers with same name and both commanded 1st & 2nd Mahsud battalions. One Major Bad Shah MBE is from Baluch regiment who commanded 2nd mahsud from 14th October 1952 – 2nd January 1953 and again from August 1953 – November 1953, the other Major Badshah is from General List and commanded 1st Mahsud from 1951-1959³.

Both the Muzh Mahsud were employed in Titwal Sector, 2nd mahsud Battalion was decorated with Tamgha -i- Difa. After the cease fire these battalions were back to construction of road so vital for the maintenance of troops in forward areas. Mr Liaqat Ali Khan during his visit to the Dir in November 1949 has the distinction of visiting the 2nd Mahsud Battalion; he was presented with Rupees 500 by the battalion as a contribution in

² Omar Khan Afridi Mahsud monograph,

³ Frontier Corps an introduction, p-161.

Quaid-e- Azam memorial fund. Twelve mile long road that connects Garhi Habibullah to Balakot was completed in 1955; it took three years of hard work by the Muzh Mahsud. Another remarkable feather in the cap is the construction of 17 miles long and arduous road connecting Lowari Top with Mirkan Post took five years and was commissioned in 1960. Lowari Top road was initially constructed by the 1st mahsud Battalion in 1949 it connects Dir with Chitral. Malakand hydro-electric project was initiated in 1950 and was completed by end 1952 by the 1st mahsud Battalion, similarly Kaghan Valley road was initiated in 1953 later the project was abandoned.

12th September 1960

is a historic day for the Mahsud battalions, on this very day these Mahsud were combatised, mortars and machine guns took the place of pick and shovels. It was the Dir – Bajaur campaign of 1960-1961 which was instrumental in this transition. Muzh Mahsud took active part in the operations. From Dir the 1st Mahsud moved to Kalat on 12th April 1964, a successful Brampta was carried out by the 1st Mahsud on 27th July 1964 in Dansar area which is part of Jhalwan. One Tamgha-i- Basalt and one Imtiazi Sanad was sarkar's award to the 1st Mahsud.

1965 War once again saw Muzh Mahsud on the eastern border, it was only 2nd Mahsud Scouts which was employed on the border and were awarded with one Tamgha-i-Basalat { PA 4821 Captain Sikander Khan} and one President's Commendation Certificate.⁴ It was on 18th September 1965 when the Mahsud Battlions were formally converted into Mahsud scouts thus 1st Mahsud Battalion became 1st Mahsud Scouts and so forth.

Fort Salop was the permanent station of 2nd Mahsud Scouts whereas after the Kalat operations the 1st Mahsud was stationed at Shelabagh which is 60 miles from Quetta and 17 miles short of Chaman. The main tribes around the area are Kakars, Achakzais, Ghilzais and Baluchis.

In post 1965 the 2nd Mahsud was deployed in Dir area {Rabat} where it stayed till end 1968. Ist Mahsud remained deployed at Kalat for couple of years after 1965. In October 1966 it conducted a successful Brampta . The background of this was the murder of a Basic Democrat member Haji Musa who was killed by dacoits in his house almost five miles from Bela. 1st Mahsud contingent under command Captain Muhammad Ishaque reached the scene of incident and then in next ten days they pursued the dacoits with the help of trackers covering a distance of 145 miles in marathon gashting but it was rewarding as on 16th October the Mahsuds finally apprehended the dacoits. Major Sabir was the commandant with Captain Abdul Hamid Afridi as his second in command , Captain Ishaque was the third officer present in the corps during deployment in Kalat, later Major Saghir replaced the

⁴ Frontier Corps an introduction, published 1967, pp156-167.

commandant. The parades of Mahsuds on the Defence Day and Independence Day were much appreciated by the Commissioner Karachi Syed Darbar Ali Shah. Incidentally he has been political agent at South Waziristan also, thus he was invited for a cup of tea at camp while he was on tour of the area⁵. The year 1966 was a year of spin for the 2nd Mahsuds. They joined back their permanent station Fort Salop on 14th March 1966 when after a week they received orders to move into Dir State. Which they did under command Major Mahboob Shah. ‘ There is so much good in the mighty Mahsud and so much bad in the circumstances that Mizh like a steel with 100% vanadium has been put to task in various types of terrain, from meeting the challenges of the Indians on border, protecting sensitive installations in the interior and granting security to the populace of some of the Frontier States’.⁶

Sports were part of the Mizh Mahsud not that they were good in that but for their sheer effort and pure pleasure of playing. It was in 1966 that Mizh Mahsud were confident of securing a second position in the basketball and shooting but the postponement of Frontier week that year saved the day. It was in 1981 that Mahsud Scouts finally won a basketball trophy. Officers were interposted among the Mizh mahsud, for instance Captain Abdul Hamid Afridi was posted in April 1966 to 1st Mahsud.

They environment was enjoyable, Mizh mahsud officers strongly believed that Men of great learning speak simply, men of great wealth dress up simply and men of great height carry themselves smartly. It was at times shock for the army officers to report to Fort Salop directly from the Lahore cantonment. Captain Khizar Hayat Kahn FF was transplanted on this stony soil, he soon got fed up and having stayed for three months found his technique of getting back to his parent unit ‘ we miss him, his wit and jokes will always remain in our hearts...we hardly felt the absence of Captain Khizar when two innocent faces landed in the unit {as if butter will not melt in their mouths} they are Captain Hadi of Punjab and Captain Azmat Ali Shah of FF’.⁷ Years later in 1979 Captain Khizar now major acted as the second in command of Mahsud Scouts.

In 1969 both Mahsud Scouts were reorganized and their organizational structure was brought in line with other regular FC units.

1971 War

In 1971 War, almost 2560 scouts from FC were sent to former East Pakistan, where new wings were raised. 26 scouts each from Mahsud Scouts were part of the contingent. No. 2 Mahsud Scouts was deployed on Western Frontiers, it was not a single entity rather in piecemeal. Some of his scouts were sent to East Pakistan and few were attached with No.2 Mahsud Scouts; collectively they wrote the finest chapter of this fabulous corps. There were fourteen platoons in No.1 Mahsud Scouts, four each of Mahsuds, Afridis, Bhittani and two of Brohis similar was the pattern in the other Mahsud Scouts

⁵ Frontier Corps Newsletter 1966, p-53. Mahsud Scouts Library.

⁶ 2nd Mahsud Scouts

⁷ Digest of Service, Mahsud Scouts.

Mizh Mahsud were deployed at Mendar in Azad Kashmir, ably led by officers specially Captain Mujeeb Faqir Ullah Khan who embraced shahadat and was decorated with Sitara -i-Jurat so were lance Naik Wali Zar and Sepoy Abdul Haleem Brohi. No less than eighteen mahsud scouts embraced shahadat here.

The Corps took part in 1971 Indo-Pak War at MENDAR (Azad Kashmir) and following embraced Shahadat:-

a.	Captain	Mujeeb Faqir Ullah Khan	Sitara-i-Jurat
b.	Havildar	Amir Hamza	
c.	Naik	Muhammad Anwar	
d.	Lnk	Wali Zar Khan	Sitara-i-Jurat
e.	Lnk	Bakhtiar Khan	
f.	Lnk	Misal Khan	
g.	Sep	Abdul Haleem Brohi	Sitara-i-Jurat
h.	Sep	Khyber Khan	
i.	Sep	Gul Muhammad	
j.	Sep	Gul Mat Khan	
k.	Sep	Nawaz Khan	
l.	Sep	Bahader Khan	
m.	Sep	Biland Khan	
n.	Sep	Sucha Gul	
o.	Sep	Neura Khan	
p.	Sep	Aman Khan	
q.	Sep	Gul Asghar	
r.	Sep	Sher Bahader	

1974.

1974 is a momentous year in the history of Pakistan when the country was host to the Islamic Summit Conference at Lahore. On a lesser level but something of far reaching value

was the bifurcation of the frontier Corps into the Frontier corps Baluchistan and frontier Corps NWFP. Thus 1st Mahsud which was already based in Shelabagh was amalgamated into the FC Baluchistan and 2nd Mahsud Scouts became part of FC NWFP ; till 1981 the 2nd Mahsud Scouts was known as such but from this year onwards it was simply known as Mahsud Scouts.

In November 1974 the Muzh Mahsud was upgraded from one wing to three wing corps, thus the majority of pathan scouts of First Mahsud Scouts were incorporated in to the Second Mahsud Scout. The class composition was also altered with Afridi and Khattak having six platoons each, Turi having four, Orakzai , Mahsud , Mohmand and Bangash having three each, Mangal, Khalil Mohmand and Shilmani having two each.

Dir Operation 1976

In 1976 Dir operation, the Corps also took part and accomplished the task assigned without suffering any casualty and won the praise of all. In March/April 1976, the Panj Pir issue arose, the anti-Panj Pir faction formed large lashkar and started burning the houses of Panj Piris in Khajuri plain. The government took serious view of this and directed to prevent the anti-Panj Pir faction from taking law in their hands. Mahsud Scouts came to the aid of political agent and its troops were deployed at Dogra post area to prevent the Afridi lashkar from destroying the Alam Gudar factory area. Apart from this, Mahsud Scouts also succeeded in preventing the lashkars from further burning the houses of Panj Piris in the Khajuri plain and the situation was brought to normal without any loss.

In July 1981 one wing was transferred to the Mohmand Rifles which again altered the composition the major change was the increase of Shilmani tribe which now had five platoons and Afridi strength was reduced to four platoons.

Corps was composed of two wings numbered 24 and 25 wings each having a strength of 698 scouts. Wings were commanded by majors, each wing had four rifle companies commanded by junior commissioned officers, rifle company was composed and organised on having three platoons and a platoon headquarters. A field battery was integral to the corps having a strength of 110 gunners who all were scouts , battery had 25 pounder guns. In the authorisation table the corps was supposed to have 20 officers and 55 JCOs along with 1559 scouts, 112 NCe and 15 NCu apart from 30 clerks; the most serious deficiency was in the category of officers. A lieutenant colonel was in command, major as his adjutant and quartermaster with another three or four captains performing as wing commanders. One medical officer was also part of the organisation.

Work load was not much but it was diversified , being reserves of IGFC the option of being deployed and employed anywhere in Pakistan was a reality and in later years Mahsud Scouts remained deployed in Sindh for well over three years in early nineties. Later when the corps was upgraded to three wings than no 26 wing was added. Fort Salop, Jhansi Fort and Fort Milward were the three forts and three wings rotated among these.

Shin Kamar Operation 1975

Shin Kamar is an important pass which connects the Tirah , Maidan area with the Khajauri plains. Shin Kamar pass is as important as the Khyber Pass which is also close by and under control of Afridi. The best part of Shin Kamar is the relative ease and the availability of water all along. It leads to Tirah and then downward to Kabul valley. Tirah is almost 6000 feet in elevation.

Under Major General Naseer Ullah Babar SJ and bar, the IGFC of NWFP it was principally decided to push the writ of government to the Durand Line. Till then the tribal area was practically a no go area for the government.

In March 1975, the Muzh Mahsud took part in Shin Kamar operation in Khyber Agency when the dispute arose over construction of Fort Salop – Shin Kamar road between the government and the Afridis. The Afridi strongly resented it and tried to prevent its construction. Ist Mahsud Scouts troops had to be deployed in Shin Kamar (a restricted area) and accomplished task assigned to them with great success. In the end road was not completely constructed rather a track was made. The next issue was the check posts erected on the road and checking of smuggled goods. It must be kept in mind that one of the finest production of hashish is cultivated in Tirah Valley. Afridi's tribal economy is centred around hashish cultivation and further distribution all over the world or at least its sale in Bara, smuggling and transport are another two key features of Afridi life style. Thus the construction of road and subsequent check posts were not appreciated by them and they remained a bone of contention .

Shin Kamar Operation 1993

On 22 February 1993, Zakha khel Afridis, who opposed the road construction from Shin Kamar to Tirah Valley and their chief Malik Nadar Khan raised a lashkar of 80-100 men including hired Afghans to stop the construction of road by force, for which they occupied strong positions in Shin Kamar, which dominated the surrounding area. To counter the hostile tribesmen, a mobile gasht of Mahsud Scouts reached Shin Kamar on 22 February 1993. The hostile lashkar opened fire on them. The troops with the concurrence of political authorities also returned fire with heavy weapons. The situation remained tense up to 04 March 1993. On 04 March 1993, Mahsud Scouts, with the help of Khyber Rifles decided to give a final blow to the hostile tribesmen and captured all their positions. After exchange of fire and physical assault dislodged the hostile tribesmen from their positions. The tribesmen suffered four deaths without any casualties on own side. Later the force returned to Fort Salop safely.

On 18 March 1993, it was reported that a lashkar consisting 100-120 men has again occupied the heights in Shin Kamar area and started firing rocket launchers, which continued till 19 March. However, after lot of efforts, the heights were cleared from the miscreants. Two tribesmen were killed on our side by miscreant's fire while troops suffered no casualty.

On 16 April 1993, lashkar consisting of 100 - 150 men again occupied the heights of Shin Kamar area. On 18 April 1993, morning, Mahsud Scouts started

advance. The troops faced heavy fire. Later on, 25 Pounder guns started firing in support of the advancing troops the hostile lashkar abandoned their positions and withdrew.

In 1996 the situation again demanded interference of Mahsud Scouts. Sipah a sub tribe of Afridi also have certain territorial claims and rights in Shin Kamar. They in December 1996 took actions against known criminal Zaira Jan and Milat Khan on the Fort Salop –Shin Kamar Road. The firing continued from early morning till noon when political authorities requested Mahsud Scouts intervention, by the time own scouts arrived at the scene at 1630 hours the situation was receding. Milat Khan had died and Zaira Jan was wounded. One stolen car, one pick up and one suspect Khitab Gul was arrested.

These are not the last words about Shin Kamar as from new millennium onwards a new kind of terrorism dawn on the valley.

1980-2000

In early sixties and till late seventies a tourist boom was encountered. People from all sphere of life would travel to Landi Kotal onwards to Kabul to watch Indian Movies. Landi kotal itself became a den of all kind of devilish activities. Pornography was common so was the hashish. Bara Market was centre of attraction for the people coming from down country for shopping. Soap, cloth, tobacco, perfumes , weapons and so on. It will not be out of proportion to write that no marriage was complete till the dowry is not purchased from Bara was a common theme then.

Afriди tribe became the richest tribe among all other pathan tribes and unfortunately all this wealth was centred around activities which put them into international limelight. In mid eighties the Heroin was introduced in the country so was Kalashnikov both now synonymous with Afghan Jihad of 1979-1989. Haji Ayub Afridi an ex khasadar who shot to fame in 1946 when he had fired a shot on the Nehru who later became prime minister of India while he was touring and addressing the frontier province. Ayub Afridi was the uncrowned king of Heroin smuggling, production and marketing; thus for these twenty years a regular flow of barampta were conducted against mischievous clans. Regular internal security duties in connection with Muharram was another constant charter of duty. Sports, training and ceremonial aspects were major shades of life at Mahsud scouts. Water shortage at Fort Salop was a matter of concern and in 1981 the boring of another tube well was carried out.

Independence Day celebrations were always colourful. Starting with Namaz Shukrana at 0700 prayers at all three forts , Salop, Jhansi and Milward, at 0800 hours address of commandant and at 0900 hours hoisting of flag and singing of national anthem. In the evening at 1700 hours a friendly match of either basketball or volleyball between the officers and JCOs the bara khana at 1930 hours and then a variety programme would finish the day in befitting manner.

In November 1981 a Brampta was carried out by Mahsud scouts under command Lieutenant Colonel Shah Dad khan with two companies of Mahsud scouts and two

companies of Khyber Rifles in Dara Adam Khel ; eight persons were apprehended including much wanted Laiq Shah.

In 1982 an effort was made to name the wings after the heroes of 1971 War thus No.25 Wing became Mujeeb Wing, No.26 Wing was known as Wali Wing. However this did not last and old numbering of wings was resorted. Summer training of the corps was carried out with 27 Brigade which was stationed at Landi Kotal. On 22nd June 1982 Major General Muhammad Afzal IGFC inaugurated the gate ceremony of Fort Salop. It was the efforts of Lt Col Shah Dad Khan who had given the charge of Mahsud Scouts to Lt Col Fazli Moeed SJ a month before the ceremony. In August 1982 the field battery was permanently transferred to Mohmand rifles including 3.7 inch howitzer. In the same time period construction of a workshop was undergoing at Jhansi.

Sports were the main attraction with teams going all over the Pakistan to take part in various competitions the inter company competitions were held and conducted at wing level then inter wing competitions and finally the inter corps matches as part of FC Week. Para teams were taking part in the meet on regular basis. It was in 1983 that MS won the coveted basketball trophy by beating KM at Parachinar by 53-45 points. In the inter wing declamation contest Sepoy Muhammad Ishaq stood first, Naik Imtiaz Ali of this corps stood second in inter corps declamation contest in 1983. 26 wing has the distinction of lifting the inter wing firing competition for the year 1983, in the same year the corps under Captain Qamar Ul Islam won the most coveted trophy of inter corps firing competition at Parachinar, so did the mortar platoon which also won the trophy.

Raising of third wing was carried out on 20 February 1986 and was given the serial number of No.27 Wing. It was in April 1986 that Besai feature was permanently occupied, eight platoons were initially employed and deployed.

Bara Operation 1987

The first serious encounter took place in January 1987 when a tribal jirga of over 3000 lashkiris comprising of Afridi confronted Mahsud scouts near Sheekhan, resultantly three maliks were killed in the shoot out and many other were wounded. By 22nd January a tactical headquarter was established at Bara and reinforcement from army in the shape of 22 Cavalry was called upon. Lieutenant colonel Abdul Jamil commandant MS was the over all commander of the operation, additional wing from KR was also called in as reinforcement, a contingent from Thall Scouts also arrived on the scene on 23 January. It was only in the first week of March that the tactical headquarters was removed after the situation was brought under control. This was one rare occurrence otherwise the environment remained cordial. Afridi tribe has been a peaceful tribe and almost all its clans especially bordering the Peshawar like Malik Din Khel are realistic in mindset , preferring their economical outlook above everything else.

Gilgit 1988 was a sad tenure for the Mahsud Scouts, they had gone there in June in connection with sectarian riots which by itself was a rare incident at Gilgit till then. One

scout Sepoy Mir Wali Mahsud of No.26 Wing was drowned in Gilgit River. The contingent remained there for another a year .

1988 however will be remembered for the fabulous performance of various sports teams. For the first time the inter corps championship was being held at Fort Salop's own basketball courts. Previously Mahsud Scouts used to organise such like events at Qayyum Stadium Peshawar. Mahsud Scouts won the basketball trophy beating Chitral Scouts on 14th July 1988. A month later Mahsud Scouts was host to inter Civil armed forces basket ball championship which was won by FC NWFP.

1988 elections again saw the Mizh Mahsud spread all over the province for the internal security duties. They were deployed at Abbottabad, Chilas, Manshehra, Shinkiari to name few.

Mahsud Scouts in Sind. From February 1992 onwards Mahsud scouts were deployed in interior and urban Sindh. No.3 Wing was deployed at Moro to operate angst the dacoits , they joined back in Khajauri Plains in September 1994. The frequency of brampta increased from once a quarter, it was now every month and then becoming every week, number of gasht were also increased.. For instance in June 1992 one Brampta was carried out in general area Bara under command Captain Muddassar Bilal along with 58 scouts. Dacoit Khan Haider son of Bahadur Shalobar Kambar Khel was able to outwit the scouts but his brother Sher Haider and one other Ghulab Khan of same tribe were apprehended and handed over to political administration. Another such Brampta was carried out in Fort Milward area in connection with kidnapping of a air force officer but nothing was found.

An unfortunate incident occurred in January 1994, on 25th January a procession of students along with elders stormed pass the Bara Bazar and threw stones on Mahsud Scouts posts, later incident of firing also started in which one student was killed. On 27th January a mobile gasht of 72 led by officers passed through Bara. It was after a week of negotiations that matter was resolved. It was again in 2000 onwards when similar unrest was caused by the students in Bara.

Bajaur Operations of 1994. Summer again found Mahsud Scouts moving back and forth . Two companies along with three officers and 202 other ranks including seven JCOs left Fort Salop on 21 July 1994, they were back to fort Salop on 28th July. One wing was deployed at Daggar and this wing moved to Bajaur agency on 10th October v1994, later another wing comprising of 450 men also moved into the area on 10th November, Major Akhtar Mahmood was the commander of the force. There were few wounded casualties but they all were discharged after a fortnight. There was one incident of particular interest as it was the first such occasion in Mahsud Scouts. On 21st October 1994 Naik Miraj Ali Orakzai of 3Wing was shot dead by Sepoy Javed Hussain Orakzai. There have been instances of soldiers deserting the Mahsud Scouts running away with their weapons , there were two such incidents in the eighties.

Opening act of 1995 was the Mahsud Scouts led by Commandant Lt Col Sikander Ilyas Lodhi carried out a raid on Ilam Guddar factories on the night of 28/29 January and

recovered approximately 3000 maund of charas, opium and heroin and also apprehended nineteen notorious anti social elements without any loss. Another major incident related to these seizures was an attack on the Mahsud Scouts convoy in July 1995 in which major Sana Ullah was wounded along with Naib Subedar Muhammad Riaz and Havildar Haider Ali of AC Squadron. The end result of the skirmish was the establishing of posts by the Mahsud scouts at Shin Kamar, Milaward, Besai -1 and 2. Two officers of Mahsud scouts were kidnapped by the locals in August , Captain Wisal Muhammad and Captain Mohsin Ali both were released after a day without any harm.

The Afridi's are very keen as far as the compensation is concerned, irony of fate is that drivers of Frontier corps are bit dare devil in these stony tracks. Killing of a lamb or even hen under the wheels of mahsud scouts can arise a huge hue and cry calling for jirgas also as last resort, the main aim is to fetch as much price as possible. Thus a lamb of average value can fetch almost four times to his owner by dying down under the wheels of Mahsud Scouts.

On 27th October 1994 a boy of Aka Khel Afridi came under the vehicle of Mahsud scouts, luckily he was only hurt, he was taken by the Mahsud Scouts to the Peshawar hospital and while they were coming back the road was blocked and the scouts vehicle was forcefully snatched away. It was returned later on. There were a host of kidnapping in the area for ransom and as such many brampta were carried out. Commissioner income tax was kidnapped and later was shot dead and his body was abandoned in the area, it took place in September 1996. Consequently no less than two dozen houses were demolished in various localities. Another big seizure was carried out in September when 1125 kilograms of hashish, four kilograms of opium and bottles of liquor were recovered.

1997 initial days were full of 'Brampta', in February no less than eight brampta were conducted on a single week i.e., 18th- 25th February. Rest of 1997 was practically spent in carrying out brampta which were meant to cleanse the area of unwanted persons and purify the environments free of drugs., both were daunting tasks in Afridi domain. These operations were carried out among all clans of Afridi, In august a Brampta was carried out in Malik Din Khel area, a day earlier similar operation was carried out in Sipah area.

Tree of Discord

In 1989 when the present expansion of the fort was undertaken by the Subedar Major Khial Afridi, a wall was built around the fort , however on the road end which leads to Shin Kamar the gate of the fort was just on the edge with family quarters and playing fields across the road. There was a tree close to the family quarters which was an obstruction to the drivers and every now and then its bushes would damage the wind screen. Commandant ordered its cutting down, as the scouts gathered around for its cutting the local started gathering and by evening it became a political affair with local strongly rejecting its cutting as it was on their lands. The operation was postponed and similar efforts were made by all subsequent commandants but tree remained defiant. It was finally in 2010 that when the wall was built

around the fort only then it was cut down , it was not used for any purpose rather the trunk is lying in the open, lest the owner comes back and ask for the property.

Last days of Millennium

The last major Brampta of 1999 ended in the death of Sepoy Hussain Khan Shilmani and sepoy Khobiya Khan was injured. Brampta was carried out on 1st October 1999, to apprehend notorious outlaw Bahadur Khan. The force was led by Major Naseem along with Captain Sanaullah and Shahid Khan. The outlaw house was cordoned but intensive fire from the house kept the force at bay till these two valiant scouts stalked forward and shoot the Bahadur Khan, in the process Shilmani died on the spot due to wounds and Khobiya Khan survived. Both were recommended for Sitara i Basalat.

In November 1999 the over all command structure of all Frontier corps was elevated thus now a Colonel became the commandant with lieutenant colonels as wing commanders. Colonel Zakir Hussain was the first commandat6 in such capacity.

Mizh Mahsud 2000-2007

Life in Mahsud Scouts was not affected much by the war against terror, there are many facets of this aspect. Historically very seldom the whole of Pathan tribes have risen together, last it happened was in 1898 with Tirah uprising. Frontier Corps as a whole took it in stride and gave an composed outlook. There were regular and planned competitions in sports, qirat, declamation, firing, band, and annual week was the Wimbledon of the year. All corps commanders along with subedar majors and representatives of all qaum would gather at all the corps headquarters honoured by President of Pakistan or Prime Minister or Chief of army, navy or air force, governor , IGFC, and son on. Mahsud scouts had a wonderful time, its teams and firers brought laurels after the laurels , they wee almost unbeatable at fort salop in any competition including band.

Their most significant contribution was the Mahsud army Public school which was opened on 20th April 2000 by IGFC Major General Taj Ul haq and Commandant Zakir Hussein. In October 2003 Qirat competition was held at Landi Kotal, Mahsud scouts naib Khateeb Shah Hussain obtained eight position; very next year competition was held at Fort Salop in February and Mahsud Scouts were adjudged second in Hifz and third in Qirat, week later firing team in inter unit firing competition held at Thall stood seventh. Mizh mahsud stood second in the orienteering competition held at Landi Kotal on 1st December 2003.

Mahsud scouts performed well in the courses too, lance Naik Ali Marjan Afridi stood second in FC course of 82mm Mortar. In the religious teachers declamation contest also held at Fort Salop in august 2004 , Naib Khateeb Muhammad Khan stood first with Tochi Scouts second and Chitral Scouts third.

Haiti , Naik Bakht Wali Khattak, Naik Hayat Khan Yousafzai and Lance Naik Fida Muhammad have the distinction of being the pioneers among Mahsud Scouts they are the

very first to serve overseas with UNO at Haiti Police, they departed on 20th August 2004. In 2007 the last year of peace in the valley , Basketball championship was organised at Landi Kotal the Mahsud scouts stood second. Football championship was held at Parachinar in June, Mahsud scouts lost all matches and stood 12th.

PAF trainer aircraft crashed at Murad Talab on 8th June both pilots ejected safely and Mahsud scouts cordoned the area.

Change of command. Colonel Mahmood Raza was reverted to army after completing his tenure of command and he was taken over by Colonel Mujahid Hussain a gunner on 28th August 2007.

First wave of trouble in Bara started in April with the students demonstration and razing of Managl Bagh;s house however real trouble in Bara Valley started on **1st September 2007** when the Taliban announced their arrival in the valley by carrying out blast and dropping written warning. After forty eight hours the conspiracy was cleared when the real culprits belonging to Badr Mujaheeden and Jaish Muhammdi were arrested who confessed of the blast; they were picked up by the Mangal Bagh men and tried them. By this act Mangal Bagh or lashkar i islami took the notion of victory , it was very similar to the killing of Kirri group in Miranshah by Taliban in December 2005.

From this point onwards Lashkar i Islami men started roaming inside the Bara bazaar carrying weapons and khassadars just turned their eyes other way around. Mangal Bagh showed his force on 11th September by entering the bazaar from Shalobar Chowk and exiting Alhaj Market in a procession of forty vehicles all armed to teeth.

Fort Salop

today is the headquarters of the Mahsud Scouts, Fort did not had any outer boundary wall, almost all the forts constructed in Khajauri Plains by the British did not had any outer boundary, it was in 2010 that Colonel Naseer Janjua the commandant initiated the project and completed within his tenure a remarkable feat indeed, it is worth mentioning that Colonel Janjua has a reputation of building walls around the Forts he did it at Boya where he was commanding a wing in Tochi Scouts. The present office block which stands majestically in the heart of the Fort Salop was also completed by him.

It was occupied by the 2nd Mahsud Scouts in 1960 before them wings of Thall Scouts and Khyber Rifles were other regular visitors. Army regiments after 1947 never occupied the fort. Naib Subedar Abdul Jalal and Naib Subedar Mira Gul both retired in February 1966 were fundamental in uplifting of fort along with Subedar Major Ajmal Khan, Naib Subedars Kamal Jan and Gul Sher Khan. Fort wall was built and trees planted. Roses and dahlia were the favourite flowers.

Fort today covers an area of 10 acres with a twenty feet bricked wall all around having sentry towers at regular intervals, the water source is well, initially there was only one well but now two wells cater for the water requirement, there is electricity with generators as stand by. The complete construction of the fort which excluding the main office block and new

medical inspection room dates back to early days; it consists of tin roof huts and long elongated barracks, the roof is invariably painted in red colour. In last five years it has gone through major renovation which are still underway. The current project is to construct the bunkers for the troops and already three such bunkers have been completed by Colonel Naeem Sarwar since taking over command in mid January 2013

Fort has a main gate which is a new one due to construction of wall, after a distance of 500 meters stands the old and original building, it had a wall which were removed or pulled down in post 1947. Inside the fort the troops residential area is on the east where as the office blocks stands in centre with officers mess and officers residence including commandant house adjacent. A central small park with a miniature lake, Birds cages adoring it.

On the outer perimeter the artillery, armour and signals occupy the main grounds with sentries posted on the posts round the clock. In recent years Fort has been receiving mortars from the Afridis on regular basis. There are six families of troops and three families of officers residing inside the fort.

It receives fresh ration on every Wednesday, pay is collected on the first of every month from Peshawar and brought back to fort under heavy guard, pay day is a happy day. The area is generally level with a very gradual slope. There are few old trees still left despite almost eighty years of living, the two oldest trees flank the office block on south. By and large soil is tough , water shortage has not helped in putting forward an orchard worth mentioning and neither there is any crop however small kitchen gardens still add colour to the dinning tables of officers and other ranks. The lambs issued as part of fresh ration are a regular sight, they move in herd and spend the days nibbling on what ever grass is available

Fort Salop was fortified in those days apart from three tanks, there were one company each from Khyber Rifles, Dir Scouts and Thall Scouts , they all left by third week of October 2007. Tanks were used on 6th November 2007 when Namdar group had started gathering around post at Narai Qarwal, all three tanks along with QRF consisting of four officers, four JCOs and sixty scouts moved out of fort and threatened the group who after playing hide and seek finally vacated the area minutes before the last deadline. Keeping in view the situation three 25 pounder guns were also brought into the fort.

Both these groups finally got what they were asking for; on 7th November 2007 both groups started firing on each other and at 1515 hours , Mahsud Scouts got the permission from political administration to engage all hot spots. 13 rounds of fired on Shinko and Namdar post after which the political agent called upon commandant and informed him that both groups have contacted him on mobile and had agreed to all the conditions but the artillery fire should be closed down immediately. Thus guns of mahsud again roared next day when 25 pounders fired five rounds after sunset on Takia Markaz which ahad been captured by the supporters of Namdar group.

On the same very day the house of Namdar was encircled by the tanks and eight rounds were fired, yet he managed to escape. Namdar was supporter of Mangal Bagh. Eight houses of Zarif Group supporters were burnt down by Managl Bagh . While punishing the

house of Namdar apart from tanks , recoilless rifles and 25 pounder guns were also used. Alarmingly 14 rounds of 75mm RR misfired out of a total of 47 fired, similarly five rounds of 25 pounder also misfired out of a total of 36 rounds.

Commandant Mahsud scouts in his appreciation fully highlighted the fall out in case any action is taken against the Namdar Group because in his opinion Mangal Bagh will fully support the Namdar thus preparation must be carried on before hand; before initiating any action against Namdar.

By end December Mangal Bagh had gained the strength and confidence to start enforcing his brand of shariat, people were stopped at prayer times and told to offer the prayers, he also interfered with the shuhada conference being organised by Jaish Muhammadi and Badr group to remember their martyrs in Afghanistan. Mangal Bagh also demolished the house of Malik Din Khel's Sher Muhammad. Mangal Bagh was now playing to the galleries, he beheaded the notorious murderer and hired assassin Riaz on 9th December at 1300 hours. 3rd January 2008 marks the rising of this bus conductor as the king maker, he gathered around 10,000 men at Mandi Kas ground and allowed all candidates appearing for the forth coming elections to speak out; naturally all pledge their loyalty to him and thus the crowd elected Mangal Bagh as their representative.

Milward Fort.

In first week of January 2008 the fort was fortified with battery of 130mm and three tanks which were at Fort Salop. Special Operation group {SOG} company comprising of 82 all ranks including three officers also joined others at Milward on 12th March .

April 2008 also witnessed intense tension in Shakas area where Mangal Bagh group was present, the Jamrud- Bara road was blocked, and additional troops were rushed to the Shakas Fort to meet any eventuality. On 21st April , eight scouts of Mahsud were kidnapped while moving in a vehicle towards Shakas from Fort Salop a distance of not more than three miles; only one scout managed to escape and narrates the story. Irony of fate was that at 1930 hours the seven scouts were handed over at Fort Salop by none other than Haji Namdar. On the same day one vehicle was toppled due to high speeding , it was later burnt by te mob. The scouts who were kidnapped also had their weapons and ammunition including five rifles one machine gun and over 5000 rounds of ammunition; it was also returned next day by Haji Namdar. In later years Haji Namdar became a loyalist with stae and by 2013 was heading the amn Lashkar and manning the forward most approaches and tracks against Mangal Bagh. Haji Namdar was punished by the Mangal Bagh for his association with Mahsud scouts, on 1st May 2008 a suicide bomber blew himself up at Takia Markaz a stronghold of Haji Namdar , there was no dead casualties only twenty odd persons were injured.

Mangal Bagh group had the cheeks to even walk into the shopping area next to Fort Salop on 24th April 208 and tried to force the people to wear cap and stop playing music, an instant show of force by Mahsud Scouts compelled them to pledge that they will not enter the area again. Mangal Bagh is one of those rare miscreant who has made full use of modern technology, he had his own FM radio station from where he would address the people and

pass orders on day to day basis. One of his demand was handing over of Pir house to him. Pir house is located 5 miles south of Fort Salop is a compound of mud houses, it was initially Pir Saif ur Rehman an Afghan refugee who came here in 1970 and soon his residence became a centre of attraction.

Operation Sirat –e- Mustaqeem

On 28th June 2008 much awaited operation against Magal Bagh started under code name Sirat-e-Mustaqee. One troop of tanks ex 21 Hoirse, own tank and two APC apart from bomb disposal parties established road block on Bara – Tirah road, first objective was to capture the Gandhao Post from miscreants. Commandant Colonel Mujahid Jussain led the operation. Post itself was vacant but surrounding heights were occupied. The suspected bunkers were destroyed through tank fire; this resultantly compelled the miscreants to move into the Tirah Valley, one miscreant was killed. Mangal bagh ow3n house was also demolished using explosives, Kohi Markaz was partially damaged at 1830 hours and force came back to Fort Salop . Curfew was imposed in the Bara sub division for the day. One wing of Tochi scouts was also present at Fort Salop.

On 29th June at 1340 hours the Ansar Islam lashkar markaz was also demolished. On the same day while coming back the private jail of Mangal Bagh at Kohi was also demolished, it was reported by the locals abouts its presence and location.

On 1st July Ilm Guddar was the target, one kidnapped person Gul Miran Kuki Khel was released from the bondage, three abductees were also caught. Pir House was under the control of Managl Bagh , it was also freed after a heavy shoot out in which four miscreants later surrendered to the Mahsud scouts. On 2nd July , Bara area was combed and sanitised, patrolling was carried out through Kohi, Mandi Kas, Dogras, spin Qabar and back to Fort Salop, eleven persons belonging to Mangal Bagh group were arrested along with eight SMG and two 9mm rifles.

Mahsud Ambushed

8th July 2008 in real sense brought the war to the Mahsud Scouts, one vehicle was coming from Hayatabad to Fort Milward in relation with an administration duty of Dairy Farm. One kilometre short of the Fort Milward, both single cabin vehicles, one carrying milk and other as the escort came under fire, area is thick with growth providing ample opportunities for any killing party. After fifteen minutes of firing four scouts of Mahsud had embraced shahadat and other eight were injured. Naik Abdul Rehman Bhittani, Naik Rehmat Ullah Mahsud, Sweeper Manzoor and lance Naik Muhammad Zahoor Shilmani were among the dead. Surprisingly only two SMG and one Rifle G-3 were missing; it was all they were carrying.

By end August all additional troops were de-inducted from the Shakas, . Haji Namdar group took on the Taliban head on , they carried out an ambush on 20th August 2008 killing three persons of Tehreek Taliban Pakistan {TTP} and one was injured. On the same five more persons of TTP wre kidnapped by Haji Namdar group.

September 2009

Month of September began with miscreants attack on fort Milward, they attacked with mortars and RPG-7 but they landed short of gun positions. On 11th September three more guns of 130mm m calibre reached Fort Milward from Jamrud. Mangal Bagh also kidnapped one Tandal of Mahsud Scouts, Rahat Gul Afridi who was kidnapped by Mangal Bagh group but later released on the intervention of political administration, it was a case of misunderstanding. In another similar cases Subedar Daulat Khan was coming with his family when he was taken away on gun point , his family was left unhurt. In retaliation Mahsud scouts in next two days arrested no less than twelve persons belonging to the Mangal Bagh group. On 22 September in an abortive ambush laid by Mangal Bagh the scouts retaliated and resultantly four miscreants were killed.

December 2008. Operation Dar Alam

In mid December the local population took out a procession for the supply of electricity however it was the dying days of the year when the operation Dar Alam was put into action on 30th December 2008. The force comprising of one company of 3 Sind regiment, company of Mahsud scouts, platoon of SOG, Troop of tanks from independent armoured corps squadron{IACS} and bomb disposal team , air was on call thus an air contact team was also taken along; Commandant Mahsud Scouts led the force. At 1100 hours Cobra gunship helicopters were called in which soften up the target at Qadwar Killi, nine rounds of tanks and 11 mortar bombs also punished the target area, 10 AK regiment's battalion mortars were also in support. Target was nothing but a compound comprising of three mud houses belonging to Saifur and Adamjee, all in all seventeen persons belonging to various tribes were arrested.

On last day of year , the force left Fort Shakas at 0900 hours and cordoned houses in Sher Sakhi colony at 1030 hours. Over 300 houses were searched and 119 suspects were arrested. Najeeb house was the next target , Najeeb himself surrendered and his house was demolished, 126 suspects were arrested out of which there were 63 locals and 63 Afghanistan. Haji Monin was the next on line and he also surrendered along with six of his followers to the force , his house was also demolished.

2009

Opeartion Dar Alam continued with force again setting out of Fort Shakas under command Commandant Mahsud Scouts. Adamje House was the target which was cordoned off at 0930 hours, composition of force remained almost unchanged from the first day operation. Adamjee was arrested and house demolished. Jandol's house was next to go, 502 cartons of meal ready to eat of NATO was recovered, two more houses were demolished namely that of Johar and Obaidullah both were razed to ground. Weapons were recovered but they wee neither modern nor deadly in nature, one 8mm rifle, one 7mm rifle and couple of

hundred of rounds. Alamdar's house was the last to be demolished on the very first day of year . all in all 143 suspects were arrested.

2nd January was no different from other days as force set out from Fort shakas at 0700 hours, Wazir Dand market in Jamrud was cordoned, 50 odd shops were demolished with excavator. Another operation was carried out at hayat Khan Serai at 0900 hours, force then moved towards Kharkhano where two markets were demolished and at 1100 hours house of Zalmai was demolished. Most of the items recovered were of commercial value like Wine bottles {63 in number} hashish packets{35} opium seven packets, heroin half kilogram , few odd weapons and fake currency all trade marks of Afridi enterprise. On 3rd January , wall chalking of different groups was removed by a force under command Lt Col Asif.

The big catch was found on 4th January , Jalat Khan's house was searched and explosive laden vehicle and suicide jackets were found. Operation continued into second week of January as well with search of houses and their demolishing creating a favourable impact among the local population , slowly but gradually the area was being cleared of anti social elements and miscreants. Majority of the suspects were mainly anti social elements very few were miscreants in true sense. Up till 10th January more than 200 suspects were arrested, in the process many kidnappers were recovered and equal number of kidnappers were arrested, stolen cars were also handed over to the political administration. One Saudi national Zaibi-ul-Taifa was also arrested in one of the search operation carried out on 21st January 2009. One side effect of these operations was the breaking down of Taliban's administrative support, all their supporters were being taken to the task, workshops where the miscreants were getting their vehicles repaired were closed down and mechanics arrested.

By end March the operation was called off after desired results were achieved. Biggest cache of arms were recovered from Haji Market in Alam Guddar area, Wahid and Saifoor two most wanted criminal houses ewere demolished, 31 suspects were arrested, weapons confiscated included 75mm RR, RPG-7 , 12.7mm gun, 82mm Mortar to name few. Narcotics factories at Alam Guddar were also raided in the last week of March where 80 kilograms of hashish was confiscated from one house. The over all catch was 50 tons of hashish. By last week of March the focus was shifted towards the aka Khel area.

14th September 2009 was another eventful day, a search and cordon operation was carried out in Malik din Khel area, at 1400 hours the QRF moved out from Fort Slop and after n hour of driving was at the site, it was the house of Taj Muhammad and Asghar Khan nothing aws found thus the search operation was extended another 500 meters ahead and tis is where the tings went wrong, the fire from miscreants took the life of Sepoy Sadiq Hussain Turi and Lt Col Muhammad Kamran was hit in the shoulder with a bullet. Mahsud scouts killed four miscreants in this encounter and three were caught. Tanks fired 18 rounds, 11 RPG-7 were fired and over 700 rounds of 7.62 mm were fired apart from throwing of 15 hand grenades. A menace in the form of anti tank mine was detected in mid September in shin Kamar area.

By the start of winter patrolling, mobile gasht and check post were erected all around the area and suspects were being caught and handed over to political administration on daily basis. Suspects were either interrogated by the intelligence set up of Frontier Corps or by the army. After intensive scrutiny the people were classified as white or black, white means that person is cleared and as such was then released from custody.

In October the Fort Salop was hit hard by the miscreants using mortar and rockets which are non precision, out of ten rockets which they fired six landed inside the fort., damage was minor with only five scouts receiving splinters , one was treated by own doctor and four others were referred to CMH Peshawar.

31st October 2009

A black day for mahsud scouts, at 1145 hours the routine patrolling of the area was being conducted on a Toyota single cabin vehicle, it was a sunny day with breeze flowing, Naaib Subedar Grambad Shah was sitting on the front seat, they had left Fort Salop and were heading towards the sdur gar area when a blast happened, it was a remote controlled IED, seven scouts embraced shahadat on the spot. There were two vehicles , the other vehicle remained unhurt and they evacuated the casualties to the Fort Salop.

In retaliation an extensive patrolling was conducted to apprehend the culprits eight persons all from Malik din Khel tribe were arrested on 6th October, one Mahsud scout Seppoy Said Nabi Jan embraced shahadat while two more suffered injuries. Meanwhile Fort Salop was also targeted by miscreants and no less than 30 shells were received within a span of an hour, however damage was not much only four scouts were injured. Ganado Post was next to be targeted a fire arid was carried out by miscreants. Same day[20th November 2009} a QRF of Khyber rifles was victim of an IED when it was proceeding to shin Kamar for the provision of ration and fresh to the scouts deployed there, one Havildar Muhammad Ashraf embraced shahadat while three other wee injured. A QRF of Mahsud scouts then went to the site for evacuation , it6 also supplied the much needed ration to the post at Shin Kamar.

2010

Year started with a peace for a week and then on 16th January Lt Col Sheraz of Mahsud Scouts who was recently posted to the Mahsud led an operation in Spin Qabar Khel, it was a whole ady operation in which two companies of NLI also took part, thirteen soldiers of NLI were injured to miscreant firing. Two more search and cordon operation were conducted within a week and over two dozen people were apprehended, this pattern remained in vogue in February as well. In March a deviation from standard teaching was made when on 17th , Mahsud Scouts also laid an ambush; two miscreants were injured. In April the poppy fields were destroyed in Dogra and Jhansi area. In May a joint operation with police was carried out and houses were destroyed in Jhansi first half of year was spent in area domination by patrolling and carrying out sting operation. In June an IED blast injured five scouts of Mahsud. Miscreants had little to retaliate , IEDs were blasted but luckily they did not caused much damage. Another factor was an improved equipment, initially Mahsud

Scouts did not have any detector but now bomb disposal parties were well armed with latest technology and it made a visible difference.

Janjua Wall

Colonel Naseer Janjua was the commandant of Mahsud Scout 2009-2011, a veteran cavalry officer who has commanded a wing in Tochi Scouts before being promoted. He had taken part in Kurram and more importantly in Swat; an officer who has been leading the scouts from front. It was Colonel Janjua who undertook the gigantic task of erecting a boundary wall around the Fort Salop which in true sense gives the feeling of fort and has enhanced the area and security of the Mahsud scouts to a level which is unprecedented since 1930 when the Fort Salop was constructed.

The length of wall is 8125 feet having a width varying between 18 inches to 27 inches, its height at point is around twenty feet although at points it is twelve feet. Piquets numbering a dozen have been constructed at cardinal points all along the wall and covers all around. These piquets have sleeping area and washrooms adjacent. The piquets itself are spacious having size of 14 feet by 14 feet with an width of 27 feet. It is pucca brick wall , no less than 2.7 million bricks were used, these bricks were brought from Peshawar and daily almost four to six truck loads of brick was brought to fort. Fort Salop has serious shortage of water thus the construction of wall is commendable. 11700 cement bags were used ,21892 kilograms of T-iron has been incorporated in the wall to give it strength. 27 civilian masons were employed for the construction , the project started in January 2010 and was completed by January next year. Major Muhammad Amir was the project officer, Major Shoaib was the quarter master of the scouts and as such directly supervising the wall, Subedar {later Subedar Major}Abdul Waheed Bangash was the project JCO and Naik Azmat Bangash was the project NCO, Corps Subedar major Khalid Usman Khattak was another pivotal figure. Above all it was the driving force and personality of the Colonel Janjua which made all this possible. There were many stages in the construction which needs elaboration. The wall runs along the bed of the stream and during the flash floods of 2011 a portion of wall suddenly collapsed. Battalion Havildar Major Havildar Akbar Mahsud recalls ‘ there were six or seven scouts working at the time and i rushed to the spot, although all were safe yet i was not mentally at peace4 and it was only after carrying out a physical count of the scouts in the fort did i had a sigh of relief’. Now the wall has been altered in a way to let the water pass by.

This was the first major construction work undertaken by the Mahsud scouts in last thirty years and the wall is testimony to the fact that the skills of Mahsuds are unmatched even today as far as the construction is concerned, let it not be forgotten that it was the construction for which Mahsud battalions were raised. It was a time of great achievement, the insurgency was getting off the ground in Bara Valley and as such the wall came very handy when the full weight of military was thrust in the valley and the miscreants retaliated, wall proved to be insurmountable . Above all wall created a sense of achievement and a bondage among the Mahsud scouts. Their living for a year centred around this wall, all night work remained in progress, extra tea and edibles were prepared, officers took part with the scouts, Colonel Janjua practically breathed the wall till its completion.

In last thirteen years no other wall can match the grace, length and magnitude of this wall which was constructed under hostile environment. Today it stands a symbol of state's authority. wall cost 1,89,96,570 rupees. It was constructed by the Mahsud Scouts, no civilian labour other than the masons were employed.

October Blast. On 20th October 2010, an IEDE blast near Sur garh took the lives of Naik Altaf Khattak, Sepoy Ansar Khan Afridi and Sepoy Nawaz Orakzai, three other scouts were injured as well. In another accident which took place on 24th November at Shin Kamar another IED took the lives of three more scouts namely, Subedar Khan Alam Mahsud, Sepoy Ayub Gul Bhittani and Sepoy Ishaq Ali Turi and seven others were injured.

2011 was no different from previous years but extensive and aggressive patrolling and area domination by the Mahsud scouts had lessen the hold of the miscreants but it was a continuous battle. Almost daily operations were carried out and suspects being caught. On 3rd March 2011 in an search and cordon operation carried out by 1W, 2W, 3W and 1W Khyber Rifles in Alam Guddar for the rescue of a kidnapped khassadar , a fierce fire fight erupted resultantly six scouts all sepoys embraced shahadat and two were injured.

June 2012

1Wing QRF was on patrol under command Captain Manna Ul Hassan, as they reached near the Al haj market an IED blasted which rip through the vehicle, Captain Manan , Naik Tariq Mohmand, Lance naik Kamran Bangash, Lance Naik Yousaf Bhittani, sepoy Bahadur shah Mohmand, Ali Badshah Afridi, Khan Afzal Bangash and lance naik Nawaz Gul Bangash of Khattak scouts all embraced shahadat while three other scouts were injured who were immediately evacuated to Peshawar. Captain Manan was a cheerful officer , his father always calls at Fort Salop when ever any accident is reported in media and prays for the safety of all.

Lashkar Islam was mostly busy in hit and run operations, they would use a pick up , park it at some place, sprinkle the place with water brought in a bucket , place the mortar and fire few rounds, by the time their location is ascertained with the help of radars they simply move and flee into the thick growth. In one such arid carried out on Jhansi Fort on 18th august 2012, sepoy Mohammad Khateeb Mahsud embraced shahadat. Miscreants fired 15 rockets out of which ten landed inside the fort, five scouts wounded which were taken to the Peshawar.

Evacuation of wounded by itself is an operation, on one hand is the early and speedy evacuation of the injured scout which directly affects the morale, on the other hand is the hard reality of endangering more scouts in the rescue operations. An elaborate decision has to be taken in time judging all the angles. Culturally the scouts does not care much about their own lives when it comes to the rescue of fellow scouts but at times commander had to wait for an hour to carry out the rescue operation.

December 2012. A constant and continuous skirmishes continued between the mahsud scouts and miscreants, they resorted to sniper firing and Mahsud scouts carried out sting operations on suspected localities mostly on intelligence tips. Checking the movement

of people in the area, domination of the valley and imposing the writ of state. IEDs remained the biggest threat in the area. In an incident on 9th December 2012 one such blast took the life of Sepoy Muhammad Hasim Yousafzai of 5Wing swat scouts.

Ghundai Post, 12th December 2012

Perhaps the most devastating incident of the last few years when the post was attacked by the miscreants and were able to over run it and get away with a sizeable quantity of weapons, ammunition, ration and other items. It all started on 12th December at 1745 hours when the post acme under fire attack, initially mortars were fired by the miscreants which all fell short of it. Miscreants were engaged with artillery in eastern direction towards Mufti Madrassah. A heavy lashkar was reported by the post commander at 1818 at the base of the psot . By 1830 hours the base bunkers of the post had been captured by the miscreants. Reinforcement was sent but by 1855 hours Post Commander Subedar Wali Khan reported the situation to be out of hand due to overwhelming numbers of miscreants, at 1905 hours he informed about vacating the post along with 15 other scouts by 1910 it was all over post was in the hand of miscreants. The scouts after vacating the post had gathered at Kohi Post. A counter attack was being planned and troops were being move and they established positions by 2230 hours. They move forward and reached the top by 0230 hours; it was taken back. Sniper continued on the post and it resulted in the shahadat of a sepoy Jahangir Khan Afridi on 17th December while another Afridi scout was injured. Nullah Post was another hard hit post mostly by sniper fire.

2013

There was heavy fog in January which made the operations bit difficult especially due to keeping direction . Arjali Nadi came under attack in mid January which was beaten back, however Naik Hussain Ahmed Mohmand and Sepoy Aminullah Khattak of mabsud Scouts lost their lives along with two soldiers of Punjab Regiment , eight soldiers were injured all from Mabsud Scouts.

In January 2013 command was changed and handed over to Colonel Naeem Sarwar who was already commanding the Khattak Scouts, a gunner officer who have been battalion commander in Pakistan Military Academy. Sting operations were carried out as in past, however one mark change at present is the efforts of commandant to bring back the normalcy in the Bara Valley. It is being achieved with aggressive verbal and physical bouts with the miscreants and simultaneously an effort is underway to win the heart and minds of local population. Polio drop campaign resulted in over 18000 children being given the vaccination. On first two days 10th & 11th June it was carried out in Bar Kambar Khel and on 12th in Sepah area which is heart land of Mangal Bagh, til 1200 hours not a single family came however commandant's message to Faqir Wali in the area changed the scenario. Most significant is the opening of Bara Canal. Reconnaissance with irrigation department was carried out on 113th June, commandant himself went to see the Spera Dam, on the way back he adopted the Kuh route which was closed since 2010. This small step will go a long way in establishing the writ of government and finishing no go areas in the agency.

